

February 28, 2023

**MOTION BY SUPERVISORS JANICE HAHN  
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**Protecting the Health of Vulnerable Communities Surrounding the Former Exide Facility  
by Monitoring Residential Property Cleanup Efforts**

The Exide battery recycling plant in Vernon (Facility) was forced to close in March 2015 by the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ). In October 2020, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and DOJ supported a Settlement that allowed Exide to go out of business and absolved it of its liabilities going forward, including closure and cleanup of the facility and cleanup of residential properties in the surrounding communities. Since then, the California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) has been the lead agency in the residential soil sampling and cleanup program.

Toxic emissions from this facility, including lead and other poisonous chemicals, have impacted over 100,000 residents of Los Angeles County, particularly those living and working in the communities of Vernon, Maywood, Huntington Park, Commerce, Bell, Boyle Heights, and East Los Angeles. Individuals in these communities are plagued with high levels of lead that place them at serious health risks every day. Children, especially those under the age of 6, run the highest risks, since chronic low-level exposure to contaminated residential soil can lead to developmental and behavioral issues. Such issues include decreased IQ, decreased attention span, hyperactivity, impaired growth, learning disabilities, hearing loss, and insomnia.

DTSC committed to clean up the soil of residential properties within a 1.7-mile radius of

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the Facility, known as the Preliminary Investigation Area, prioritizing homes, schools, parks, and daycare centers. For residential properties, DTSC set a cleanup standard of either reducing lead in soil to a concentration below 80 parts per million (ppm) or removing contaminated soil down to 18 inches below ground level and replacing it with clean soil.

Community members and organizations have voiced concern over the cleanup process and how it continues to impact their lives. Recently, a Los Angeles Times investigation revealed that DTSC contractors have failed to meet the 80-ppm standard in more than 500 homes that have already been cleaned, and environmental regulations were violated during the cleanup resulting in citations by the South Coast Air Quality Management District. A collaborative study by the East Yard Communities for Environmental Justice, University of Southern California and Occidental College tested surface soil from remediated yards, and results indicate that a majority of homes had at least one sample test above 80 ppm and 22 of the 93 homes in the study tested over 400 ppm, the federal limit. Additionally, cleanup of the parkways (the area between the sidewalk and the curb) continues to be unfunded and not included in the current scope of work, which leaves these areas contaminated with lead.

Our communities deal with the effects of Exide's pollution every day, and each day that goes by without a complete cleanup is another day that children risk the grave effects lead can have on their health and development. As long as there are elevated levels of lead in the soil, the children of the communities surrounding the Facility will continue to be at risk; DTSC must redouble its efforts to ensure cleanup happens as intended. These communities deserve a

thorough and complete cleanup, and DTSC must ensure it meets the standard it set for the cleanup process.

**WE, THEREFORE, MOVE** that the Board of Supervisors direct the Chief Executive Office's Legislative Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations branch to send a 5-signature letter to Meredith Williams, Director of the California Department of Toxic Substances Control, with copies to Senator María Elena Durazo, Senator Lena A. Gonzalez, Assembly Speaker Anthony Rendon, Assembly Member Blanca Pacheco and Assembly Member Miguel Santiago, who have districts in the identified impacted communities, asking that the Director:

1. Ensure all residential cleanup has met DTSC's standard; and
2. Identify funding for the cleanup of parkways and other zones where lead buildup can be identified.

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**JH:jm/gc**